

## APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

### 2014 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Citizens Schools, Inc.

Application ID: 14ED157229

Program Name: Citizens Schools National Corps of Teaching Fellows

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

#### Reviewers' Summary Comments:

##### Strengths:

There is strong evidence to support the need for effective education interventions in middle grades. High-level data is provided by the applicant on the problem. For example, using the National Assessment of Educational Programs in two cities (Houston and Chicago), poverty rates, 40% of 6th grade students at Citizen's partner schools met standards for proficiency in math before program launched.

The applicant clearly defined the need for interventions that will keep middle grades students from low-income communities on positive educational trajectories. They presented a case for educational interventions within their target grade levels.

The applicant demonstrates how AmeriCorps members are the core of Citizen Schools' expanded-day partnerships. AmeriCorps members are diverse, with good academic skills.

Three evidenced-based studies were referenced with a review of the findings. The Orchard Gardens study shows an adequate increase that justifies a continued presence for AmeriCorps members the schools.

The applicant demonstrated stability and long-standing influences in the area of need throughout the communities they serve.

The applicant's past performance in 2010-2012 demonstrates success in 9 out of 11 performance measures. Despite falling short of goals due to a decrease in student attendance, Citizen Schools has increased enrollment by an average of 20% annually, increased the number of students served per school from 66 to more than 150, and decreased its cost per student while maintaining or increasing program quality.

##### Weaknesses:

It was unclear at times if the data presented was for the applicant's community, or if they were simply stating statistics on a national scope. The applicant did not clearly define the community served.

The applicant does not provide sufficient diversity of data by city regarding AmeriCorps members who are the core of Citizens School expanded-day partnerships. There is a reference made to the cities in which Citizen Schools will serve high need schools, but no data are provided by city regarding the AmeriCorps members who will be serving them.

The applicant's most recent past performance in 2011-2012 demonstrates regression/downward trend while adopting fewer national performance measures.